

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the consideration of the present application afforded by the Examiner. Claims 20-39 were pending prior to the Office Action. Through this reply, the limitations for claim 38 have been introduced into claim 20. Claim 38 has been canceled and claim 39 has been amended to depend from claim 20. Claim 20 is independent. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 20-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,734,910 to Yumoto et al. (“Yumoto”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,549,232 to Taniguchi et al. (“Taniguchi”). In the Office Action, the Examiner has indicated claims 38 and 39 are objected to as being dependent upon rejected based claim 20, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In the response to the indication of allowable subject matter, Applicants have amended claim 20 to include the limitations of claim 38. It is hereby respectfully submitted that claim 20 is now in condition for allowance, at least due to the inclusion of allowable subject matter indicated by the Examiner.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 20-31 and 39 are patentable over the prior art and respectfully request the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Claims 32-37, variously dependent upon claim 20, have been withdrawn from consideration as being directed to the non-elected species. As generic claim 20 is now in condition for allowance, Applicants respectfully request rejoinder and allowance of claims 32-37.

CONCLUSION

All objections and rejections raised in the Office Action having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Notice of same is earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact John R. Sanders (Reg. No. 60,166) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By _____

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